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CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1. A method for initiating a streaming media transfer between a server device and a client device through at least one interconnecting network, the method comprising:

selectively transferring an initial portion of a stream of data from a server device to a client device via a plurality of network resources;

establishing a guaranteed quality of service path from the server device to the client device via a portion of the plurality of network resources; and

selectively transferring a subsequent portion of the stream of data over the guaranteed quality of service path from the server device to the client device.

2. The method as recited in Claim 1, wherein selectively transferring the initial stream of data from the server device to the client device occurs, at least partially, while establishing the guaranteed quality of service path from the server device to the client device.

3. The method as recited in Claim 1, wherein selectively transferring the initial stream of data from the server device to the client device occurs until the guaranteed quality of service path from the server device to the client device has been established.

4. The method as recited in Claim 1, wherein selectively transferring the initial stream of data from the server device to the client device further includes establishing a data connection using a first protocol, and wherein establishing the guaranteed quality of service path from the server device to the client device further includes establishing a guaranteed flow specification using a second protocol.

5. The method as recited in Claim 4, wherein the first protocol includes a Real-Time Streaming Protocol (RTSP).

6. The method as recited in Claim 4, wherein the second protocol includes a Resource Reservation Protocol (RSVP).

7. The method as recited in Claim 1, wherein the initial portion of the stream of data is transferred over the plurality of network resources at a first level of quality of service, and the subsequent portion of the stream of data is transferred over the guaranteed quality of service path at a second level of quality of service that is higher than the first level of quality of service.

8. A computer-readable medium having computer-executable instructions for performing steps that initiate a streaming media transfer between a server device and a client device through at least one interconnecting network, the steps comprising:

selectively transferring an initial portion of a stream of data from a server device to a client device via a plurality of network resources;

establishing a guaranteed quality of service path from the server device to the client device via a portion of the plurality of network resources; and

selectively transferring a subsequent portion of the stream of data over the guaranteed quality of service path from the server device to the client device.

9. The computer-readable medium as recited in Claim 8, wherein selectively transferring the initial stream of data from the server device to the client device occurs, at least partially, while establishing the guaranteed quality of service path from the server device to the client device.

10. The computer-readable medium as recited in Claim 8, wherein selectively transferring the initial stream of data from the server device to the client device occurs until the guaranteed quality of service path from the server device to the client device has been established.

11. The computer-readable medium as recited in Claim 8, wherein selectively transferring the initial stream of data from the server device to the client device further includes establishing a data connection using a first protocol, and wherein establishing the guaranteed quality of service path from the server device to the client device further includes establishing a guaranteed flow specification using a second protocol.

12. The computer-readable medium as recited in Claim 11, wherein the first protocol includes a Real-Time Streaming Protocol (RTSP).

13. The computer-readable medium as recited in Claim 11, wherein the second protocol includes a Resource Reservation Protocol (RSVP).

14. The computer-readable medium as recited in Claim 8, wherein the initial portion of the stream of data is transferred over the plurality of network resources at a first level of quality of service, and the subsequent portion of the stream of data is transferred over the guaranteed quality of service path at a second level of quality of service that is higher than the first level of quality of service.

15. A server device suitable for use in initiating a streaming media transfer to a client device through at least one interconnecting network, the server device comprising:

memory containing at least a portion of a stream of data; and

logic operatively coupled to the memory and configurable to

selectively output an initial portion of the stream of data from the memory to a client device,

support the establishment of a guaranteed quality of service path to the client device; and

selectively output a subsequent portion of the stream of data over the guaranteed quality of service path to the client device.

16. The server device as recited in Claim 15, wherein the logic is further configurable to simultaneously transfer the initial stream of data to the client device and establish the guaranteed quality of service path.

17. The server device as recited in Claim 15, wherein the logic is further configurable to transfer the initial stream of data to the client device until the guaranteed quality of service path to the client device has been established.

18. The server device as recited in Claim 15, wherein the logic is further configurable to establish a data connection using a first protocol, and a guaranteed flow specification using a second protocol.

19. The server device as recited in Claim 18, wherein the first protocol includes a Real-Time Streaming Protocol (RTSP).

20. The server device as recited in Claim 18, wherein the second protocol includes a Resource Reservation Protocol (RSVP).

21. The server device as recited in Claim 15, wherein the logic is configurable to transfer the initial portion of the stream of data at a first level of quality of service, and the subsequent portion of the stream of data at a second level of quality of service that is higher than the first level of quality of service.

22. A client device suitable for use in initiating a streaming media transfer from a server device through at least one interconnecting network, the client device comprising:

memory suitable for containing at least a portion of a stream of data; and

logic operatively coupled to the memory and configurable to

selectively receive an initial portion of the stream of data from the server device,

support the establishment of a guaranteed quality of service path from the server device; and

selectively receive a subsequent portion of the stream of data over the guaranteed quality of service path from the server device.

23. The client device as recited in Claim 22, wherein the logic is further configurable to simultaneously receive the initial stream of data from the server device and establish the guaranteed quality of service path.

24. The client device as recited in Claim 22, wherein the logic is further configurable to receive the initial stream of data from the server device until the guaranteed quality of service path from the server device has been established.

25. The client device as recited in Claim 22, wherein the logic is further configurable to establish a data connection using a first protocol, and a guaranteed flow specification using a second protocol.

26. The client device as recited in Claim 25, wherein the first protocol includes a Real-Time Streaming Protocol (RTSP).

27. The client device as recited in Claim 25, wherein the second protocol includes a Resource Reservation Protocol (RSVP).

28. The client device as recited in Claim 22, wherein the logic is configurable to receive the initial portion of the stream of data at a first level of quality of service, and the subsequent portion of the stream of data at a second level of quality of service that is higher than the first level of quality of service.